

LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連水雅

VOLUME 4

THE BELL WARDEN

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水狼

LONE WOLF AND CUB

子と狼

story
KAZUO KOIKE
art
GOSEKI KOJIMA



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THE
BELL
WARDEN

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

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VOLUME

4

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB



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the twentieth

**Tsufi
Genshichi
the Bell
Warden**





IN 1628, THE THIRD YEAR OF THE ERA OF KAN'EI, THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE SELECTED A BELL TOWER ON NEWLY DEVELOPED LAND IN NORTHERN HONSHU-CHO SAN-CHONG. THE COMPOUND WAS TWELVE KAN ACROSS AND NINE KAN THREE SHAKU DEEP, AND HOUSED A WIRE BELL PREVIOUSLY KEPT IN THE MUSHI-MO-RABU TURRET OF SDO CASTLE AND EMBLAZONED WITH THE HOLLYHOCK CREST OF THE TOKUGAWA CLAN.



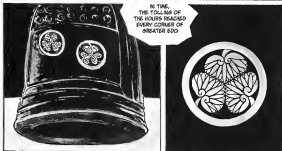
THIS EIGHTY DOLL, FIVE SHAKU AND TWO SUN TALL AND THREE SHAKU ACROSS AT THE MOUTH, BECAME OVERNIGHT THE OFFICIAL TIMEPIECE FOR THE BUSTLING CITY. FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE CITIZENS OF SDO BEGAN A LIFE REGULATED BY THE TOLLING OF THE HOURS.



AS THE CITY
GROW, MORE TOWERS
WENT UP ACROSS
THE CITY—ASAHARA,
UBANO YAMAGUCHI,
KONDO YOKOHAMA-GHO,
SHIMADA-TÔCHU,
KOSADA NAKIMARI...

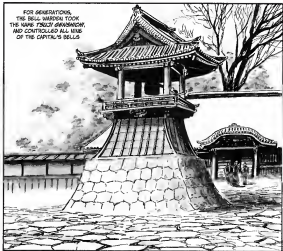


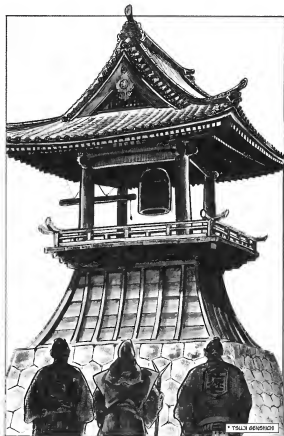
...AS JIRO FUDO,
KASABA TAMACHI,
YOTSUNA—
KING TOWERS
IN ALL.



IN TIME,
THE TOLLING OF
THE BELL REACHED
EVERY CORNER OF
GREATER EDO

FOR GENERATIONS,
THE BELL WARDEN TOOK
THE NAME TOSHIYUKI SHIMAZONO,
AND CONTROLLED ALL MINE
OF THE CAPITAL'S BELLS





• TOLLY BELLTOWER



THE SENSHIN
BELL TOWERS WERE
ABOVE THE LAKE.



THEIR VITAL
ROLE IN THE
LIFE OF THE CITY
INVESTED THE BELL
WARDEN WITH
EXTRAORDINARY
AUTHORITY.



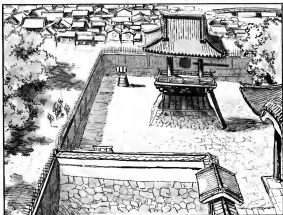


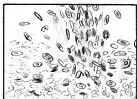
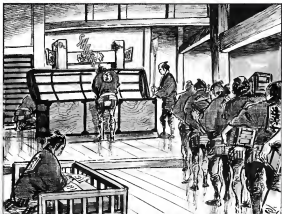






















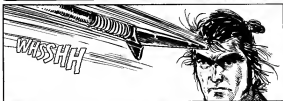


FOR GENERATIONS, THE EDO BELL WARDENS HAVE TAKEN THE NAME OF TOSHIYUKI GUNSHIMON. I AM THE FOURTH.

















AMAZING! YOU'RE EVERYTHING I EXPECTED! I'M HUMBLED!

TO TURN THE STRENGTHS OF MY KESSELM INTO WEAKNESS, AND SWAP THE TIMES...



I SEE YOU ARE HARD OF HEARING...



Y-YES...IT'S TRUE. LONG YEARS IN THE BELL TOWER HAVE RUINED MY HEARING AND LEFT ME ALMOST DEAF.



I READ LIPS TO CONVERSE...BUT NO ONE HAS EVER NOTICED BEFORE! WHAT HAVE WE WASTED?



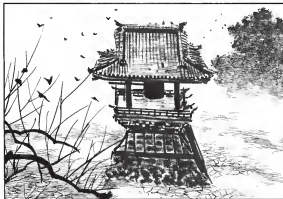
HAD YOU HEARD THE RING OF MY BOYTHAUNT'S BLADE, YOU WOULD HAVE REALIZED THE TIMES OF YOUR CASUALTY WOULD BE NO MATCH FOR IT.

HOW?

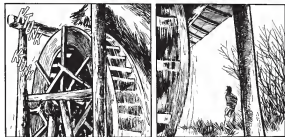


I HAVE PLEDGED NOT TO SET FOOT IN EGG LET THE THREE COME TO ME.











SIR,
COME
ITTO...

MR.



I AM APOD,
SERVING
THE BELL
WARDEN TOSHI
SEASHORN.

I HAVE NO
HATRED NOR ANGER
TOWARD YOU, SIR, BUT
ON SEASHORN'S ORDERS,
I MUST TAKE YOUR
LIFE.

SEASHORN
SAID THIS?







MURDER THUMB
MADE OF TEMPERED STEEL,
AN OCTAGONAL WEAPON
APPROXIMATELY ONE SIXTY
FIVE IN DIAMETER, AND
THREE SIXTYTHICK. THE EDGES
ARE SHARPENED RAZOR-THIN,
MAKING IT A DEADLY
KILLING DEVICE.



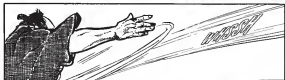
MURDER CHAIN
A LIGHT WEAPON CONSISTING
OF A CHAIN MADE OF HARDENED
STEEL LINKS, WITH METAL WEIGHTS
AT BOTH ENDS. THE USER STRIKES
UNEXPECTEDLY WITH EITHER HIS RIGHT
OR LEFT HAND, OR FROM CONCEALMENT
IN A CLENCHED FIST. A FLEXIBLE
WEAPON, EQUALLY ADAPTED
TO OFFENSE AND DEFENSE.



SALTANDY
A BLINDING COMPOUND,
COMPOSED OF A MIX. OF
FERROUS SULFIDE AND STYRENE
NITRATE. THE KEY TO DEFENSE
IS TO KNOW WHERE THE
POWDER IS CONCEALED...































KTHINK GRRKK THNINK NINGK!







HA.



THREE
THOUSAND RYU
HOW ABOUT IT...
WARRIA DEAL?!



WHAT?
?!

I GOT A WEEB
BIT BETTER HEAD
ON MY SHOULDERS
THAN MY BIG
BROTHERS,
SEE?



I FIGURE YOU'VE
DONE IN SORTY OF THEM...
WEEB MEANS, NO OTHER
WARRIA. I'M THE FIFTH BELL
WARRIA, JUST LIKE THAT!
WE DON'T NEED
TO FIGHT
ABOUT IT.



....
....

BELL WARRIA...?
HEH... MORE LIKE *WARRIA* WARRIA!
THAT'S HOW MUCH CASH POURS IN
WE'RE COLLECTING THE BELL TAX
FROM THE WHOLE CITY. SLEEP A
FORTUNE. ALL FOR ANY COME ON
FRIDAY-I'LL MAKE IT
FIVE THOUSAND.



YOU WERE
BROTHERS?

YEAH, MY OLDER
BROTHERS LEAVE AT THE
SIXTH MORNING BELL, AND
THE NOON BELL. AND THEY
DON'T COME BACK. THE SIXTH
EVENING BELL RINGS, AND
IT'S MY TURN! EVEN AN
IDOT CAN FIGURE
IT OUT.



HE'S HIRED
SOME INCREDIBLE
KILLER TO WEED
OUT WHO'LL BE THE
FIFTH BELLWICK,
AND MY BROTHERS
ARE DEAD.

....
....











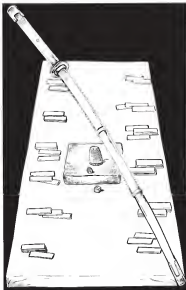


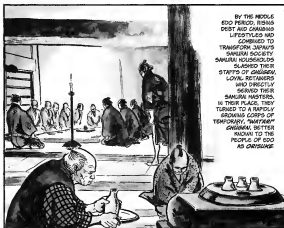
THE LING OF BELL
WARDENS PAID
WITH TOLL GARDENS
THE FOURTH THE
TUNE BELLS WERE
SUBSEQUENTLY
MOVED TO TEMPLE
GROUNDS, AND
Dedicated TO BUDDHIST
PEOPLE.



the twenty-first

Unfaithful Retainers





BY THE MIDDLE
EDO PERIOD, RISING
DEBT AND CHANGING
LIFESTYLES HAD
COMBINED TO
TRANSFORM JAPAN'S
SAMURAI SOCIETY.
SAMURAI HOUSEHOLDS
SLASHED THEIR
STAFFS OF *CHONIN*,
LOYAL RETAINERS
WHO DIRECTLY
SERVED THEIR
SAMURAI MASTERS.
IN THEIR PLACE, THEY
TURNED TO A RAPIDLY
GROWING CORPS OF
TEMPORARY, "HIRE" *CHONIN*, BETTER
KNOWN TO THE
PEOPLE OF EDO
AS *CHONIN*.



THE CHÜSEN-BASHIRA,
PERMANENTLY EMPLOYED
ROBBER WHO OVERSEES A
SAMURAI HOUSEHOLD'S CHÜSEN
STAFF, GAINED THE POWER TO
HIRE AND FIRE CHÜSEN AT
THEIR OWN DISCRETION...



...AND THE
ENTIRE SYSTEM
VEERED TOWARD
LAWLESSNESS.



HEY! HEY!
YOU'RE BLOCKING
THE LIGHT!

OUTTA
THE WAY,
SAMURAI!









THE JOURNERS WERE A NEW BREED. THEY HATED THE SAMURAI FAULTS, YET HATED NONE OF THE
 IDEALS OF SAMURAI SOCIETY (NO AGONY, NO SELF-SACRIFICE, NO COURAGE FOR THE FEAR AND
 RESPECT OF THEIR ACTIONS). THE BOND BETWEEN MASTER AND SERVANT HAD BEEN DESTROYED COMPLETELY.

SAMURAI SERVANTS HAD TRADITIONALLY FOLLOWED THE CODES OF SHINRA SOCIETY, LONG TO MASTERS
 WITH THE SAMURAI LIKING TO KILL--THE BOND OF JEWELRY RESEMBLED BUT NOW THE JOURNERS TURNED
 THE FUNCTION OF SAMURAI SOCIETY ON THEIR HEAD.





THEY WERE, AFTER ALL, ONLY ANTI-GAMBLERS AND WHILE THEIR SAMURAI MASTERS FOOTED THE BILL, THEY OWED THEIR FREE ALLOWANCE TO THE CHŌSHŪ-BAKAMAI THAT Hired THEM. IT WAS THESE CHŌSHŪ-BAKAMAI BOOGIES, READING UP GAMES THAT SHARED THE SEIGATSU FIGHTERS RIGHTS OF SAMURAI SOCIETY AND WERE ALREADY SYSTEMATICALLY ORGANIZED BY HOUSEHOLD, THAT QUICKLY TURNED MANY CHŌSHŪ TO A LIFE OF GAMBLING AND CRIME.



"DAMN BET THE SHACKLES!"

"WE NEED OUR SWORDS!"

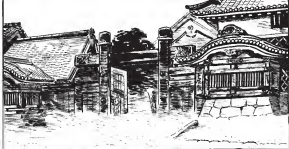


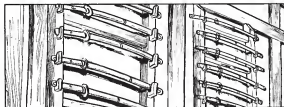
THE AUTHORITIES WERE HELPLESS TO INTERVENE. IF THEY SUPPRESSED THE CHONGS, THEY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO MOBILIZE MAN-POWER ON COMMAND. AND THUS THE CHONGS SYNDICATES GREW EVER LARGER AND COORDED, WITH THE TACIT APPROVAL OF THE JIANGYI AND THE ANTIANGYI SAHURAI FAMILIES WHO NOW RELIED UPON THEM.



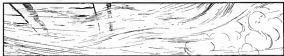
MOREOVER, THE BARRACKS IN THE SAHURAI FAMILY COMPOUNDS WERE THE CHONGS' LIVED WERE BEYOND THE REACH OF THE LAW, AND THUS TAILOR-MADE FOR ILLEGAL GAMBLING. SOON MANY BARRACKS BOSSSES, THE WEIYA-SHAWWA, WERE PRESIDING OVER GAMES OF URBLY GAMBLERS. THE CHONGS WERE TRULY THE TWISTED OFFSPRING OF SAHURAI SOCIETY ITSELF.





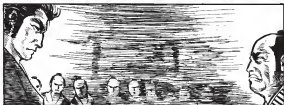














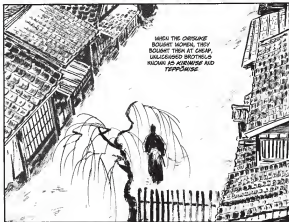








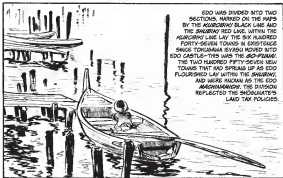








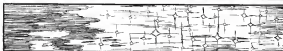




FOLLOWING ON STRENGTH OF SUMBERS, RESULTS ARE... CONSIDERED IMPROVED THROUGH DRAINING OF THE TROOP TO FLUSH OUT THE MARCHING

THE REASON FOR THE ALLIANCE WAS A MYSTERY: THE FAMED ARCH-ENEMY OF OTHER COMBAT BROS. JOINED TOGETHRE AS FIGHTING BROTHERS.











HAD I
NOT FOUND YOU
BEFORE YOUR DEATH,
THE STORY OF WHAT
HAD HAPPENED
WOULD BE LOST
FOREVER.



I WILL
NOT STOP YOU
FROM TAKING
YOUR LIVES,
BUT I WOULD
LIKE TO KNOW
WHY.



IT'S...
IT'S TOO
LATE!



YOU
HAVE
COME...

...TOO
LATE.
TAKAHARA



IT WAS TWENTY
DAYS AGO, GOOD
SIR, WHEN DISASTER
BEFELL OUR FATHER
ON THE MEMBUTSU-
SANKI ROAD, ON HIS
WAY TO A CHERRY
BLOSSOM
VIEWING.



"THE
OTHER PARTY WAS
AT FAULT. IT WAS THE
CRUEL *OSAMU-NO-CHOSUKE*,
THE HEAD OF ALL THE *WATARI-CHOSHIN* HOUSES, AND
HIS MEN.



"OUR CHIEF
IPPON WAS AN HONEST
AND HARD-WORKING MAN,
WHO REFUSED TO JOIN
ANY CRUISE
GANGS.



"THAT'S WHY
THEY ATTACKED HIM.
THEY STARTED BEATING
HIM FOR NO REASON AT
ALL, AND THEN—THEN
THEY CUT HIM
DOWN.

"THEY WERE
ALL DRUNK, CRAZY
DRUNK... NEXT THEY
TURNED ON
FATHER.







WE COULDN'T
EVEN APPEAL
TO THE AME-
NO-NO-NO
COURT-IT WAS
OUTSIDE THEIR
JURISDICTION



THEY
WOULDN'T
HAVE HEARD
OUR PLEA

NOR
COULD WE
RAISE TROOPS AND
ATTACK THE OSHU
CLAN OVER AN
INCIDENT INVOLV-
ING HERE
OVERLAP



YET TO
DO ANYTHING
WOULD SHAKE
THE FAMILY!

AND THIS
FATHER TRIED
CONTACTING YOU,
GOOD SISTER...



...BUT HE
HAD NO WAY OF
KNOWING IF YOU
WOULD COME,
OR WHEN SO,
FINALLY...



F-
FATHER!

OUR FATHER,
ALL-
BUT POWER-
LESS...

...HE
WENT ALONG
TO KILL
ONOSUKE



OUR FATHER'S
CORPSE WAS...WAS
HACKED TO
PIECES!



I UNDER-
STAND AND SO
-WHAT WILL
YOU DO?

WILL
YOU ASK
ME TO KILL
ONOSUKE

IF...IF
WE CAN KILL
ONOSUKE WITH
OUR OWN
HANDS...





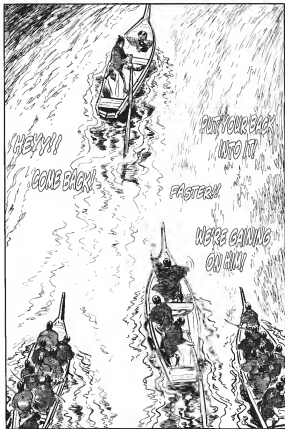


THE HUNGER OF THOSE
OF HIS LEUTENANT'S BROTHER
CHARGED INTO A BATTLE HE WOULD
BE ABLE TO SAY GOOD
BYE TO HIS OWN AND HIS OWN















A CURSE
ON YOU,
CHOSHINO!

WHAT
TH-TH WHO
THE HELL ARE
YOU??



BOYHOOD,
SON OF BUNNY
ANTHONY,
MURDERED BY
YOUR GRAD!



HIS
DAUGHTER,
RYA!















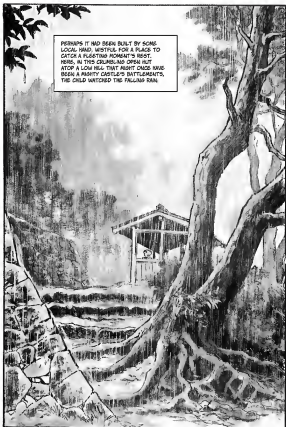


the twenty-second



Pasting Frost

PERHAPS IT HAD BEEN BUILT BY SOME
LOCAL HAND, WISTFUL FOR A PLACE TO
CATCH A PLEASING MOMENT'S REST.
HERE, IN THIS CRUMBLED-OPEN HUT
ATOP A LOW HILL THAT MIGHT ONCE HAVE
BEEN A MIGHTY CASTLE'S BATTLEMENTS,
THE CHILD WATCHED THE FALLING RAIN.



WITH EVERY DOWNPOUR,
THE FOOTSTEPS OF SPRING
PROVE *HARDY* THE TOO-LONG
WINTER. AND YET...



...TO THIS CHILD'S
HEART, THE RAIN
WAS ICE AGAINST
HIS SKIN.



WELL...



BE IT COLD, OR
HUNGER, OR SIMPLE
LONELINESS...



HE WAS A CHILD
ALL TOO USED
TO SUFFERING.
DESTINY'S
CHILD.







THE CHILD RESOLVED TO
SECK OUT HIS FATHER. HIS
HEART, THIS CHILD'S HEART,
WAS DAUNTLESS STILL.



HE WAS A CHILD
WHO KNEW HIS
FATHER LIVED
IN THE HEAT OF
BATTLE, AND
THAT WAS WHY
HE SO OFTEN
WENT AWAY.



AND SHOULD THAT
FATHER NOT RETURN,
HIS BODY, TOO, MAY
HAVE SUNKED BLOOD..
LIKE SO MANY OTHERS
HE HAD SEEN.



HE WAS A CHILD WHO
REALIZED THAT THIS,
TOO, COULD BE THE
FATE OF HIS FATHER.





TREAD ON
A FLOWER
SUFFER FOR
THE FLOWER



A CHILD'S
SPRING

KNOWING THE
FOOLISHNESS
OF ASKING
STRANGERS
WHERE HIS
FATHER
HAD GONE...



...HE WAS A
CHILD WHO
KNEW THAT
IF HE WAS TO
SEARCH, HE
MUST SEARCH
ALONE.



KNOWING
NO TEARS.

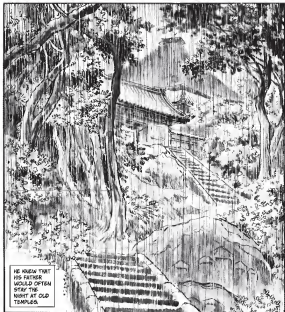


SPEAKING
NO WORDS.



A CHILD
ALONE.





HIS
FATHER,
HIS
ASSASSIN'S
DUTIES
BEHIND
HIM...



...ALWAYS
CAME TO
THE
TEMPLES...



AND SAT
BEFORE THE
SLEDONA, THIS
HE KNEW.



AND YET...
HIS FATHER
HAD KILLED
THE SLEDONA.



THE
CHILD HAD
SEEN HIM
DO IT.



SO WHY
DID HE STILL
TURN HIS FEET
TOWARD THE
TEMPLES...?





TO TALK
WITH THE
CHILD'S
DEAD
MOTHER



TO HEAL
HIS HEART
IN THAT
UNBLESS-
ED AIR



THE
CHILD
NEEDED
NO SUCH
REASONS.



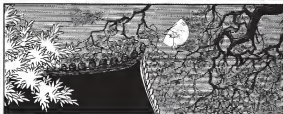
HE LONGED
ONLY TO
BLAME
HIS FATHER
ON THESE
ANCIENT
TEMPLE
GROUNDS.

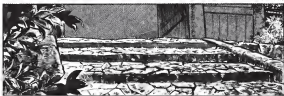


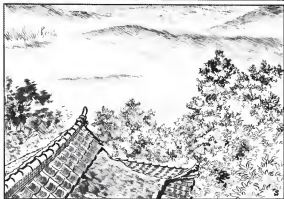


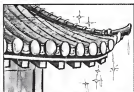
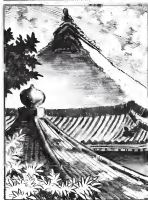
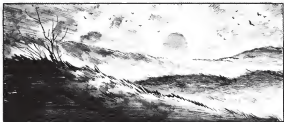


BUT FINALLY,
AT THE LAST
OF MANY
TRIPLES,
EXHAUSTED
BY COLD AND
HUNGER, HE
COULD GO
NO FURTHER.

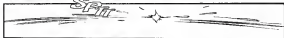
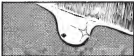


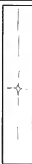


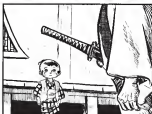














THOSE EYES... LIKE
JINSHOGRAM. THE EYES
OF A SACROSANCT
BECOME ONE WITH THE
BAPTISM OF AGNI,
ALONE IN THE ADJUNCT
BETWEEN LIFE
AND DEATH...

THE EYES OF
ONE WHO HAS
COME IN FROM
DEATH, ACROSS
COUNTLESS
FIELDS OF
SLAUGHTER...



BUT IN
A LITTLE
OVER...? NO—THIS
CANNOT BE.



IT
MAKES NO
SENSE!

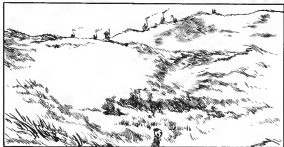


AND MY EYES
SO DULL THEY
CAN'T TELL
JINSHOGRAM
WHEN THEY
SEE IT?







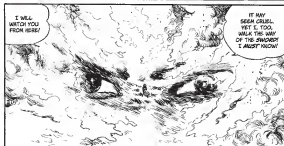






AND YET...
WHAT BETTER
CHANCE TO
TEST HIS
SWINDLERY?

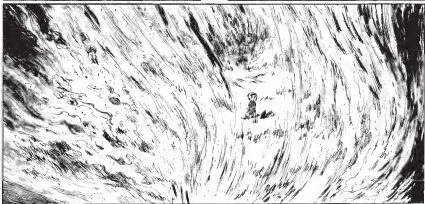
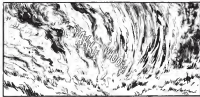
IF THOSE
ARE TRULY EYES
UNMOVING, EYES
THAT KNOW NO FEAR,
THEN EVEN WHEN
SURROUNDED
BY FIRE...

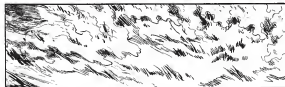


I WILL
WATCH YOU
FROM HERE!

IT MAY
SEEM CRUEL,
YET I, TOO,
WALK THE WAY
OF THE SWINDLER.
I MUST KNOW





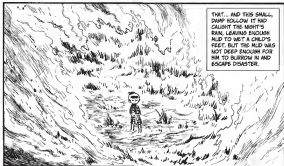


THE CHILD KNEW
HIS FATHER HAD ONCE
PILED GRAVESTONES
TOGETHER FOR
SHELTER TO SURVIVE
A RAGING FIRE.

BUT HERE
THERE WERE NO
GRAVESTONES,
NO STONES AT ALL.
ONLY THE WINDING
DRIED GRASSES
OF FIELDS READY
FOR BURNING.



THAT... AND THIS SMALL,
DAMP HOLLOW IT HAD
CAUGHT THE NIGHT'S
RAIN, LEAVING ENOUGH
MUD TO WET A CHILD'S
FEET, BUT THE MUD WAS
NOT DEEP ENOUGH FOR
HIM TO BURROW IN AND
ESCAPE DISASTER.

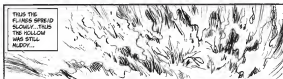


NOT WANTING
TO LET THEIR
PLANTING SLIP
FURTHER AFTER
WEEKS OF
HEAVY RAINS...



THE PEASANTS
HAD SET THEIR
FIRES THE
HIGHEST THE
CLOUDS
BROKE.





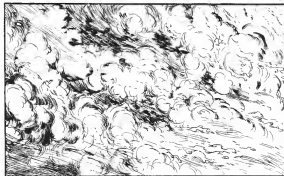
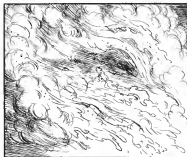


A SIMPLE,
ELEGANT
ANSWER.

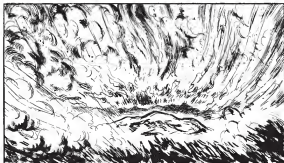


YET HOW
MANY ADULTS,
FACING THAT
ADVANCING
WALL OF DEATH,
WOULD HAVE
THOUGHT
OF IT?

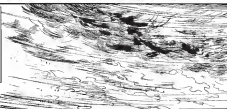








YET
ANOTHER
FORTUITOUS
CHANCE—THE
BREEZES THAT
NOW SPRANG
UP DISPERSED
THE SMOKE BE-
FORE IT COULD
SETTLE IN THE
KOLLOW.



TRULY HE
WAS A CHILD
SWOOLEN
IN GOOD
FORTUNE.

















IT'S TRUE!
SHISHYUUN! EYES THAT
ONLY A SACRIFICER WHO HAS
DIED THROUGH PAIN BY ITSELF,
WHO HAS WALKED THROUGH THE
SPATTERING BLOOD OF
COUNTLESS SLAYERS,
CAN POSSESS!



EYES THAT
BURN L, WHOSE
SWORD HAS DEALT
DEATH BEYOND
COUNTING, MAY
NEVER ATTAIN!

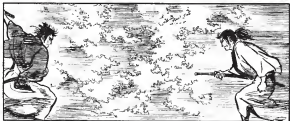
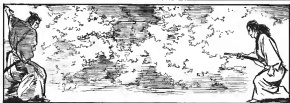
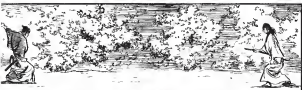
























THE LAST FROST HAD
GONE, DUSTING THE
BLACKENED FIELDS IN
WHITE. WITH THIS PARTING
FROST, THE SEASONS
NOW TURNED TOWARD
THE NEW-BORN GREEN
OF SPRING.

BUT FOR A
FATHER AND
CHILD WITH NO
TOMORROW,
WHAT DESTINY
LAY AHEAD...?





the twenty-third

Performer



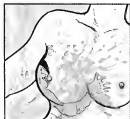




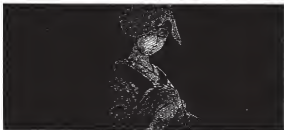


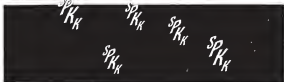


















YESSIR...THAT'S
AWESOME THE TATTOO
GUY'S HOUSE RIGHT OVER
THERE. HE THINKS HE'S SOME
BIG-SHOT ARTIST OR SOMETHING...
WEIRD OLD COOT. IT TAKES
FOREVER TO GET ANYTHING
OUT OF HIM.

“FIRST YOU GOTTA LISTEN
TO THE SAME OLD LECTURE, MORE’N
YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT TATTOOS.
BEEP THEN! YOU CAN ASK YER QUESTIONS.
JUST DON’T INTERRUPT HIM BEFORE
HE’S DONE, OR HE’LL SHUT
UP LIKE A CLAM!”

WANN?

THEY CALL THIS NEEDLE
SOUND FOWERING, LIKE IN
“DISTANT BORD.” BEEP? YOU’RE
LIFTING UP THE SKIN A BIT SO
YOU DON’T CUT TOO DEEP,
BEEP? THAT’S WHAT MAKES
IT SOUND LIKE THAT.

IT’S A SWEET SOUND,
ONCE YOU GET USED TO
IT. BUT NEW FOLK, THEY
SAY IT GIVES ‘EM THE
CHILLS. OOOOBBUMPS.

THEM OOOOBS,
THOUGH. ? IT’S REALLY
THE AM’ IN WINTER. IT
MAKES YOU FEEL FRIDGE
AS COLD WHEN I’M
WORKING IT IN. FOLKS
GET FREEZING,
THEY DO...

BUT DOES IT
COOL YOU DOWN
IN SOMANETTE HURT
NOT A BIT.



THE WAY
PEOPLE FEEL
STUFF... COLD,
HEAT, PAIN...
NOW THAT'S AN AMAZING
THING.



WIND!



WHEN YOU'RE
WORKING ALONG LIKE
THIS, THE NEEDLES GET
HOT, THEY DO. HE DRIES
TOO QUICK, SO I'VE
ALWAYS GOT ANOTHER
SET COOLING IN
WATER.



AND SKIN IS TIGHT,
DAMN TIGHT! YOU CAN
WEAR DOWN THE TIPS OF
THIRTY OR MORE NEEDLES
UNTIL THEY'RE SMOOTH
AS MUDDAH! ESPECIALLY
ON WOMEN, THEIR SKIN'S
SO TIGHT AND SMOOTH.



WOW, HER
WERE ASHIM
ABOUT... THAT
WAS A WOMAN.

AIN'T
NEVER USED MY
NEEDLES ON A
BEAUTY LIKE THAT,
NOT BEFORE
NOR SINCE.



I'M NOT
TALKING ABOUT
LOOKS, SEE?
SKIN! I'M TALKIN'
ABOUT HER
SKIN!







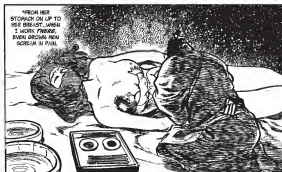
"I DON'T CARE
HOW IT IS, SHE
SAYS, LONG AS IT'S
SOMETHING THAT'LL
GET PEOPLE'S
ATTENTION.
ARE 'ER JUMP
EVEN SOMETHING
SO HORRIBLE IT'D
MAKE YOUR HEART
STOP."

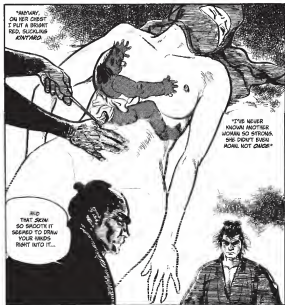




FOR PAYBE
SOMETHING TO DRIVE
FEEL MAD WITH JUST.
ANYTHING.
GIVE ME THE MOST
SHOCKING TATTOO
YOU CAN!







BUT AS I
WAS WORKING,
I ACCIDENT
SOMETHING

"FIRST I'D
THOUGHT
MAYBE SHE
WAS A DANCER,
BUT I WAS
WRONG

"SHE HAD
MUSCLES, BUT
HARD MUSCLES,
LIKE SHE'D DONE
MARTIAL ARTS.

"UNDER THOSE
RICH CURVES WAS
A HARD BODY...I'LL
SWEAR THAT WOMAN
HAD TRAINED WITH
THE SHADOW.

"I'VE HEARD
BRAWNY
TAKEN ON
WOMEN FIGHTERS SOME-
TIMES BRICKS-
DAMN, THEY CALL 'EM, SO IT
COMES TO ME, MAYBE
THIS WOMAN'S ONE
OF THEM

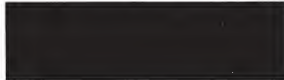
"HAYES
THAT'S WHY
SHE'D NEVER
SHOWN HER
BACK.

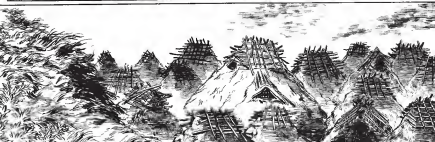


"STILL, FOR A
WOMAN FROM A POOR
FAMILY TO GO THE REST
OF HER LIFE WITH A
ACQUANTAIN ~~AND~~ ON HER
BACK AND A ~~STANDARD~~
FEELING ON HER CHEST...
WHAT THE ~~HELL~~ WAS
GOD THINKING...?"



"THAT TATTOO
WAS A ~~MASTERPIECE~~,
ACROSS THE BEST OF MY
LIFE! BUT I'VE WORRIED
EVER SINCE THAT I
DID HER WRONG."





IN THE MID-EDO PERIOD, ALL ARTISTS WHO MADE THEIR LIVING PERFORMING ON THE STREET WERE CALLED *JOHANNI*.



WOMEN MINSTRELS, SLEIGHT-OF-HANDS, STREET-CORNER AND DANCERS, STREET-SIDE GAMES PERFORMERS, DRUM DANCERS, SAKU-OIL SALESMEN, TRAVELING PLAYERS, STREET-CORNER PUPPET PLAYS, STREET PREACHERS, CONTORTIONISTS AND ACROBATS, STORYTELLERS, AND MORE. *JOHANNI* ALL.



THEY WERE CONTROLLED BY THE *JOHANNI JONGHYO*, AND CARRIED A *JOHANNI* LICENSE AUTHORIZING THEM TO TAKE MONEY FROM THE GROWS.



THE *SHOGUN* VILLAGES
WERE CLUSTERED WITHIN
THE *SHOGUN* LINE IN *SHOGUN*
ARCHAICALLY, IN A STRIP
RUNNING FROM SOUTHERN
SHIKOKU TO KYUSHU





YEAH? WHO'RE YOU?



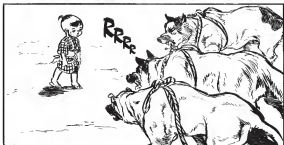
















IRMAN!

EXTINGUISHING
THE SELF-BECOMING
ONE WITH ANY HIS CHILD,
TOO, ALREADY KNOWING
THE CYCLE OF LIFE
AND DEATH...



A
FEARSOME
OPPONENT,
THE AGENT
WOLF AND
CURRY



I AM THE
FORMER
JEWEL, THE
LEADER OF
THESE
PEOPLE.



I AM
DOING IT.
I WISH TO
SPEAK WITH
YOU.



THEN
FOLLOW
ME.





BUT IF
THE HOUNDS
ARE WILLING, HOW
CAN THE MASTER
REFUSE?

....
....



BUT I'M LESS CURIOUS
ABOUT MY DOGS, WHO SEEM
HAPPY TO WAG THEIR TAILS FOR
SOMEONE WHO LIVES OFF
JACARP ARROWY, THAN THE
WOLF WHO SITS
BEFORE
ME.



I'M LOOKING
FOR A WOMAN I
SUSPECT WAS ONE
OF YOUR PEOPLE. A
WOMAN NAMED
Q-YUNG.



I UNDERSTAND
YOU'VE BEEN TO THE
TATTOO MASTER, BUT HE
SHOULD KNOW NOTHING OF
Q-YUNG'S FIST. HOW DID YOU
DECIDE SHE WAS
Q-YUNG...?

A WOMAN
OF THE JACARP
WOULD NEVER
ALLOW HER
BODY TO BE
TATTOOED.



EVEN A MERCHANT WOMAN
OR A PEASANT GIRL SEEKING
JUSTICE WOULD REMOON HER
CHASTITY BEFORE BEING SO HARRED.
SHE WOULD RATHER SEDUCE HER
OPPONENT AND CUT HIS
THROAT IN HIS SLEEP.

HAH.



IF THIS WOMAN WAS WILLING TO HAVE SUCH LURED TATTOOS REVEALED INTO HER BREAST AND DOWN HER BACK, IT WAS A WARNING TO HER ENEMIES. SHE WANTED TO USE THEM TO SHOCK HER ENEMIES, AND STIRRE UP WHEN THEIR GUARD WAS DOWN.



WHAT KIND OF WOMAN WOULD THINK OF SUCH A STRATEGY? ONLY SOMEONE WHO DEDICATED HER WHOLE LIFE TO PERFORMANCE. IT HAD TO BE THE INSIGHT OF THE *GRANDMASTER*.

INDEED, IT IS AS YOU SAY.

YOUR LOGIC IS WITHOUT FLAW.



YET, DIDN'T YOU WORRY FOR YOUR LIFE, ASKING FOR Q-YUN HERE?

OUR ORGANIZATION IS WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW YOU PURSUED HER. WHY WALK INTO THE HORNET'S NEST?

ANYONE WHO DEDICATES HER LIFE TO A QUEST IS A *GRANDMASTER* NO LONGER!



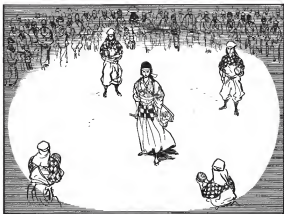
DOUBTLESS THE *GRANDMASTERS* ARE A PROUD PEOPLE WHO LOOK AFTER THEIR OWN! YET Q-YUN IS NO LONGER UNDER YOUR COMMAND! I AM THE ONE ASTONISHED BY THIS HOSTILITY ON YOUR PART!



AGAIN YOU SPEAK TRUE, AND LASTLY, A FINAL QUESTION.

....
....



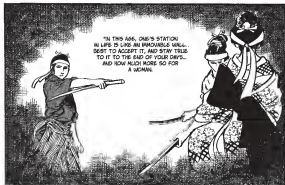








"A WOMAN CLIMBING TO THE POST
OF BISHOH-GUWA AND
SWORD INSTRUCTOR IS
TIES NOT STRANGE
AND WONDERFUL?



"IN THIS AGE, ONE'S STATION
IN LIFE IS LIKE AN IMMOVABLE MOUNTAIN.
BEST TO ACCEPT IT, AND STAY TRUE
TO IT TO THE END OF YOUR DAYS...
AND HOW MUCH MORE SO FOR
A WOMAN.





ON THE CONTO MOUNT, JUST THIS SIDE
OF TENDO MOUNT, THERE IS A HOT SPRING
CALLED FUKUWA-NO-YU. THOSE WHO WISH
TO SUCCEED ON A QUEST MUST PURIFY
THEMSELVES IN THESE WATERS FOR
SEVEN DAYS AND SEVEN NIGHTS
BEFORE THEY CAN PRAY AT
THE YUKA REICHI SHRINE.



IF YOU, TOO,
ARE ON A QUEST,
IT IS WELL THAT
YOU GO THERE.



MY
THANKS...



O-YUKO
SHE IS MY
DAUGHTER













WHY SHOY 'NUE, SIR, THAT TSUTA-MO-YU'S
RIGHT UP THE MUMETSUKI INTERIO TRAIL... SO
UP HIGHER, AND YOU GET'S T' YUKA REGION BUT
ALL THEIR SOULS WANT WANTS TO PECKY THERE
GOTTA STAY SEVEN DAYS AND SEVEN NIGHTS
AT TSUTA-MO-YU AND WASH UP BEAM GOOD!
SUCH A LONELY PLACE... *JEENE*, IT IS, AND
THAT'S THE TRUTH NOWADAYS NO ONE
GOES THERE NO MORE...











I DON'T KNOW HOW
MUCH OF A BROTHER-
SISTER YOU ARE, BUT
I KNOW YOU'RE A
FOOL TO CHALLENGE
ME!



HOW MANY
MEN...
A GREAT
DEAL WITH
COMMON SENSE
TO THIS DAY, I
HAVE SURVIVED FROM
DEFEAT BUT...



EVERY OVERSOUND
FOOL, ENOUGH TO TRY AND
GOING TO THE HEARTS
THE MOMENT HE DISCOVERS
MY SECRET TECHNIQUE...

WELL THEN
MOM!



DON'T MAKE ME
LAUGH IT'S YOUR
NUMEROUS SECRET
IT'S NEAR TO DISCOVER
PROPER TECHNIQUE!



HEH
HEH HEH.

I'D HEARD YOU
BROODER-GUYS WERE
MORE MUSCUL-BOUND
THAN REAL SHOTSGUYS.
MONSTROUSIES,
SCARCELY FEMALE.

BUT NOT
YOO! NO, YOU'RE
A SPECIAL WOMAN.
AN EXCEPTIONAL
WOMAN, A TRUE
BEAUTY??

HEH HEH
HEH...



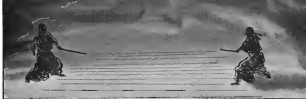
HHHHH!!

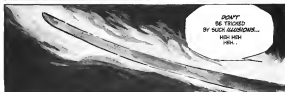


KRAK



KRAK







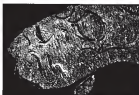


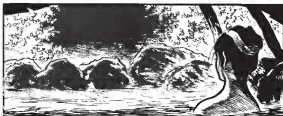




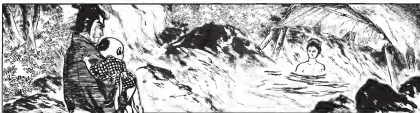




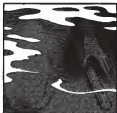














HEY!
TSUTA-MO-YU
IS IT??





WITH
A BIT OF
LUCK, WE'LL
CATCH HER
BATHING!

SHE MAY
BE FEMALE,
BUT SHE'S STILL
DEADLY—SHE
KILLED SHIN-
GAWA AND
ALL HIS
MEN!



BUT EVEN A JESSHIN-
GAWA'S STILL A WOMAN! IF
WE ATTACK HER WHILE SHE'S
NAKED, HER SHAME WILL
PARALYZE HER!

RIGHT!
WE SNEAK
UP, AND
ATTACK
TOGETHER...



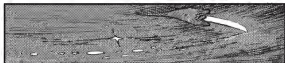
HEY...THE GUY
AT THE INN SAID
SOME GUY TOOK
HIS KID UP HERE,
TOO.

TOO
BAD! IF HE
INTERFERES,
CUT HIM
DOWN!







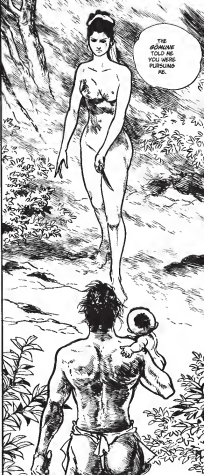














AND YOUR NAME, *LONG WOLF* AND *CLUB*!

BUT YOU HAVE NO *SACKS*! I'VE BEGUN WATCHING YOU, AND YET...



....
....



A KILLER WITH NO *SLACK* LUST, SO STRANGE!

I KNOW IT'S POINTLESS TO ASK THE ASSASSIN...

....
....

...YET THERE IS ONE THING THE ASSASSIN WOULD ASK HER ANYWAY.



WHO Hired YOU TO *KILL* ME...?



BEFORE I ANSWER...

...TELL ME WHY YOU CUT OFF THE *ARM* OF THE MAN YOU HAVE KILLED.



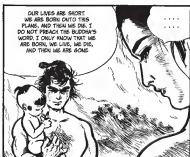
I AM A FUGITIVE FROM *THE* *ARMY*. OF COURSE OUR *LORD* IN HIS *ANGER* IS SEARCHING MEAN TO *EXECUTE* ME!

IF I CUT OFF THE *ARM* OF MY PURSUERS AND SEND THEM BACK...

AS I *WILL*.













THE LORD
I ONCE SERVED,
MATSUOKA OSHIOBU-
SAMU, WAS OBSESSED
BEYOND REASON BY
THE ARTS OF
WAR.



AND SO,
IN THE SAME
WAY THAT HE
MADE ME HIS
BESSESSY-DANN...

...THERE WAS
ANOTHER A MAN
WHO FOLLOWED A
HYSTERICAL
SORT OF
PERSISTENCE
CALLED OMA-
KOTO.



HIS NAME
WAS KOZUKA SAMU,
AND OUR LORD
EMPLOYED HIM
AS WELL.



KOZUKA
SAMU... WAS
ALWAYS
ATTACKING
ME.

HE SAID WE
JAPANESE WERE
UNCLEAN FILTHY HE
SAID THAT NO MATTER
HOW GOOD I WAS
WITH THE APPROACH,
I WAS JUST A
PERFORMER.



HE SAID
THAT A WOMAN
FROM THE JAPANESE
TO BE A BESSESSY-
DANN...

...REMARKED
THE FACE OF
TENDO SAMU.



THE SWORD IS A
SANDRA'S HEART!
SWORDSMANSHIP
IS SANDRA'S ART!

HE SAID EVEN OUR
LORD'S SERVING WOMEN
WERE DEFILED BY RECEIVING
WEAPONS TRAINING FROM SUCH
A LOW CREATURE...OH AND
OH IT NEVER STOPPED!

....
....



UNTIL...UNTIL
I FORCED MY
WAY INTO KIDZUNA
BAR'S DOOR!

CAN YOU
UNDERSTAND
MY FURY? MY
DESIRE TO SETTLE
THINGS ONCE AND
FOR ALL BY THE
SWORD?



AND
THAT...



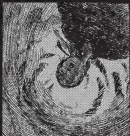
I...



HE...









IF HIS *AKOYITO*
GAVE OFF FLAMES, HE
MUST HAVE SOAKED IT
IN OIL. AND SECRETLY LIT
IT...THE FAN AS WELL.
ALL TO ACCENTUATE
HIS EYES...



TRICKERY, DESIGNED
TO CONFUSE AND ROB
HIS OPPONENTS OF
THEIR WILL...NO TRUE
SAMURAI WOULD DO
THIS, BUT IF HE WAS
A *SHIMAZU*...



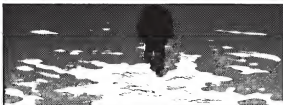
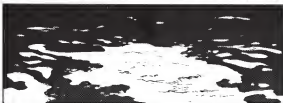
I REALIZED
THAT, WHEN
ALL WAS
OVER...

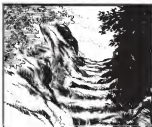
AND SO I
THOUGHT, IF
MY *SANARY*
LOST TRICKERY
TIDAL, THEN I,
TOO...



SO I WAS
CORRECT...FOUR
TATTOO...















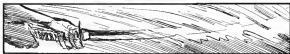








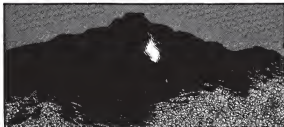












GLOSSARY

adauchi

Revenge killing. It was accepted practice in the Edo period to kill the person who had killed one's lord or relatives. If the case was strong, the authorities would turn a blind eye to the killing.

bokutō

A wooden practice sword.

bu

Approximately 3 millimeters.

buke

A samurai household.

bushidō

The way of the warrior.

currency

mon – A copper coin.

kan – A bundle of 1,000 *mon*.

monme – A silver piece.

ryō – A gold piece, worth 60 *monme* or 4 *kan*.

daimyō

A feudal lord.

dōtanuki

A battle sword. Literally, "sword that cuts through trees."

Edo

The capital of medieval Japan and the seat of the shogunate. The site of modern-day Tokyo.

han

A feudal domain.

hatamoto

Daimyō considered utterly loyal to the Tokugawa clan, with the right to meet the shōgun face to face. Their title, "standard bearers," came from history, when the warriors who would be promoted in peacetime to *hatamoto* had been the most trusted allies of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first of the Tokugawa shoguns.

hollyhock crest

Each samurai family had a family crest considered synonymous with the clan itself. The Tokugawa clan crest was a three-leaved hollyhock. To point one's sword toward the shogun's crest was to point your sword toward the shogun himself, an unforgivable act of treason.

honorifics

Japan is a class and status society, and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *o* and *go*, and a wide range of

suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Love Wolf and Oak*:

awan – for children, young women, and close friends

awao – archaic; used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures

sama – used for superiors

san – the most common, used among equals or near-equals

sensei – used for teachers, masters, respected entertainers, and politicians

jizō

Local deities, represented by simple stone statues by the roadside. Often decorated with red cloth ribbons.

kabuki

The best-known traditional Japanese theater, with elaborate staging and costumes. Tremendously popular with the townspeople of Edo.

Kamigata

The area around the imperial capital of Kyoto and the merchant city of Osaka. Now referred to as Kinki.

kan

6 *shaku*, approximately 1.8 meters.

Kantō

Literally, “east of the gate.” Eastern Japan, north of the mountain chain around Mount Fuji, especially the region around Edo, present-day Tokyo.

kasezue

Literally, “deer staff.” Distinguished by its antler-like cutting prongs.

kintaro

A legendary feral child, with red skin and superhuman strength.

kōgi kaishakunin

The shogun’s own second, who performed executions ordered by the shogun.

kurobiki, shubiki

Edo was a castle town that rose up around the moats and ramparts of Edo castle, the stronghold of the Tokugawa clan. The central core of the city, administered by the *machi-bugyō* (Edo city commissioner) and home to the households and estates of *daimyō* and samurai, was demarcated on official maps by a black line, the *kurobiki*. An outer red line, or *shubiki*, marked the limits of Greater Edo, the *go-fukuro*. In the middle Edo period, the samurai class occupied some sixty percent of the city’s land, and temples and shrines another twenty percent. That left only twenty percent of the land for a burgeoning civilian population exceeding one million.

machi-bugyō

The Edo city commissioner, combining the post of mayor and chief of police. A post held in monthly rotation by two senior Tokugawa vassals, in charge of

administration, maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law in Edo. Their role extended only to commoners; samurai in Edo were controlled by their own *daimyō* and his officers. The *satchi-bagō* had an administrative staff and a small force of armed policemen at his disposal.

mage

Pronounced *mah-gay*. The samurai's topknot.

mu

Nothingness. A crucial concept in Zen Buddhism, and a goal of all the martial arts. Clearing the mind of all extraneous thoughts and connections, to exist wholly in the moment, freed of all attachment to life and the world around you.

namu

From the Sanskrit *navat*: "take refuge in the Buddha." A common prayer for the dead.

nō

Traditional theater, performed in masks on a bare stage. Favored by the samurai class.

rōnin

A masterless samurai. Literally "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of *han*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, many impoverished *rōnin* became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

ryū

Often translated as "school." The many variations of swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any *shōshi* students that sought to learn from the master. The largest schools had their own *dōjō* training centers and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the various schools to know how to block them in combat. Many *ryū* also had a set of special, secret techniques that were only taught to school inheritors.

sakki

The palpable desire to kill, directed at another person. Sometimes called blood lust. Based on the concept of *ki*, or energy, found in spiritual practices and Japanese martial arts like Aikido. These body energies can be felt beyond the physical self by the trained and self-aware.

sanpin

A derogatory term for low-rank samurai. From the losing three-and-one combination in dice games.

seisatsu yodatsu

Under the four-caste social system imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, the samurai class had the unquestioned right to kill those in lower castes, often for the smallest of insults and infractions.

shaku

10 *sun*, approximately 30 centimeters.

sun

Approximately 3 centimeters.

KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Lone Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talent.

Lone Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kozure Ōkami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1972, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Assassin* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman* , the manga Koike created with artist Ryūichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gehigo Seisaku* , a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear. "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibui*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-ben* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-ben* readers.

In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Dojinski*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Kozure*

Okami (*Lone Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.



RONIN REPORT

By Tim Ervin-Gore

Weapons Glossary: Part One

Swords are by far the most romantic instruments of death in Japanese feudal history; from the graceful long sword, also called a *daito* or *katana*; and the shorter but powerful *wakizashi*; to the *tanto* used in the infamous *seppuku* act. Magnificent enough to supplant the noble horse and bow as the weapon of choice for samurai, the blade took on an almost religious significance, its art refined and secretive, both in the making and the wielding.

And the practice of making a good sword was kept secretive. Creating such a weapon is painstaking, scientific, and exact, and the art is practically lost. In the *Samurai Sword* handbook by John Yumato, much can be learned about the construction and identification of swords. But in writing *Lone Wolf and Cub*, Koike and Kojima showed a marked fascination with the plethora of dangerous and exotic weapons which evolved in feudal Japan. Many of these weapons can be found in common reference books, but quite a few are too obscure for a quick study. The following is a brief index of some of the weapons found in the first four volumes of *Lone Wolf and Cub*.



Fig. 1. *tanto*

In traditional Japanese sword smithery, three traditional sizes of swords evolved over a long period of time. The *tanto* (fig. 1) was the most commonly available. Often, under decree of stiff shogun rule, commoners were prohibited from carrying blades at all, aside from those used in agriculture and industry. When the

peasants decided to rise up against the ruling warrior factions, fewer dangerous weapons made it easier to quell the unruly citizens. However, when it was authorized (or out of sight), the simple and concealable *tanto* was the secret pillow partner, often wielded by women, and easily hidden in the folds of one's robes. Dogged by its reputation as a belly-slicing suicide instrument, the *tanto* was a useful second sword to the thrifty samurai. These knives were generally less than 12 inches in blade length, and, due to a largely utilitarian role, not always of the highest quality.

The *wakizashi* (or *kodachi*) (fig. 2), a medium sized sword 1-2 feet in length, was a stout and useful weapon. In *Love Wolf and Cub*, Ogami's *dotanuki* is identified as a *wakizashi*, and a mean one at that. Miyamoto Musashi, a renowned samurai from the early 1600s, established a style of carrying and



Fig. 2. *wakizashi*

wielding swords that would change the face of the samurai forever, that of carrying two swords (or *dai-shu*), and fighting with both at the same time. This new method popularized the making of swords in pairs. Though occasionally a samurai would choose to pair his long sword with a *tanto*, the samurai elite most likely carried a *wakizashi* as the match of his *daito*.



Fig. 3. *daito*

The *daito* (*odachi, katana*) (fig. 3), long and graceful, was the polished trophy of the samurai elite. Such swords of high quality and reputable manufacture were highly treasured and handed down through generations. This is the sword most romanticized in literature, film, and manga. A *daito* sword was usually over 2 feet in length, occasionally built longer to match the will and height of the samurai who wielded it. Being the main battle blade of the samurai, the *daito* was created with extreme precision, accounting for generations upon generations of secretive smithery. The methods of the archaic master swordsmiths were lost in waves of less violent times, as the masters themselves turned their skills and shops over to more modern uses, such as the manufacture of scissors and other tools. Their swords, however, still grace the walls of museums and collectors, many in fine condition, a testimony to their makers.



Fig. 4. *Kozuka*

A samurai may have kept a few small knives for utility and tactical purposes, occasionally mounted in the hilt of a *daito*. These knives may have been used for throwing at an enemy or a last-ditch cut to the throat. The larger of these knives was the *kozuka* (fig. 4), which makes numerous appearances in the *Lone Wolf and Cub* series. An example of Koike and Kojima's use of such a weapon occurs in "The Flute of the Fallen Tiger" (*LW&C* Vol. 3), in which one of the Bentenrai brothers throws a small knife past the face of a mouthy commoner in a threatening gesture. Ogami returns the blade by tossing it straight into the scabbard of one of the brother's swords. As a side note, it should be mentioned that a few pages after the appearance of this *kozuka*, Ogami refers to it as a *kogara* — a small bird. But as Ogami's blade is referred to as a *datanuki*, so would other blades be named after their

performance. So, a small blade made to fly swiftly through the air might have been called a *kagura*. Even more interesting were *wari-bashi* (split chopsticks). These small knives were likely to be quite handy for any number of uses. According to Yumoto's handbook, *wari-bashi* were used to secure one's hair, and their bases could handily be used as ear cleaners.

But the sword was not the first weapon, and its exclusive availability made it scarce amongst the fighting foot soldiers. Instead, many soldiers employed spears and spear-like instruments to occasionally administer slow death upon their enemies. One particularly effective method of fighting was the use of a spear from horseback (fig. 5), as shown in "Sulo School Zanbato" (*LWC* Vol. 1). Skill



Fig. 5. spear from horseback.

with a spear was a highly regarded art, and coupled with the furious gallop of a powerful horse, the weapon was difficult to avoid and painfully effective. A pierced torso from a charge with a spear left many unfortunate soldiers groaning in pools of blood, awaiting merciful death.



Fig. 6. *naginata*

Such an offensive created the need for a properly defensive weapon. Taking up this duty was the incredibly effective *naginata* (fig. 6). With a long, wooden handle and a curved, one-sided blade, the

naginata was a vicious instrument akin to the halberd, historically used to chop the legs of cavalry horses and fight swordsmen at a safe distance. In *Lone Wolf and Cub*, Ogami's spring-loaded cart handles are a form of *naginata*, which he employs with deadly effect. Although the long blades of Ogami's spring-loaded pole-arms look a bit like the similar *nagamaki*, the handle of the weapon is longer than the blade, which was apparently the measure of difference between the two weapons. The *naginata* is a graceful weapon and is a popular modern martial art form.

In *Lone Wolf and Cub*, many pages are devoted to exploring the effectiveness of these standard war weapons, but Koike and Kojima seemed to enjoy the less conventional weapons and their tactical uses. One such weapon, or rather, an extension of numerous weapons, was the weighted chain. In *Classical Bujutsu*, an excellent study of Japanese martial tradition, Don Draeger describes the sickle and chain, or *kusarigama* (fig. 7), a multi-resourceful weapon. Casual observance of many Japanese martial traditions exposes likely evolutions of weapons, and some of the



Fig. 7 *kusarigama*

more impressive weapons derived from agricultural tools. Though pedestrian on its own, the addition of a light chain with an iron weight on the end changed the sickle into a death trap. Thrown by an expert, the weight could break bones (or trees, according to Koike and Kojima), and the chain could wrap around an opponent and his arms, leaving him vulnerable to the sickle's blade. An excellent example of the *kusarigama* and its use is shown at the end of "Close Quarters" (*LW&C* Vol. 3), in which Ogami finds himself face-to-face with a master of the *kusarigama* and is challenged to get beyond the reach of the iron weight at the end of the chain. The sickle aside, the weighted chain makes numerous appearances in *Lone Wolf and Cub*. In "A Father Knows

His Child Heart, as Only a Child Can Know His Father's" (*LW&C* Vol. 1), a weighted chain is planted in the staff of one of Ogami's opponents. In "Eight Gates of Deceit" (also in Vol. 1), a woman attacks Ogami with a short sword and weighted chain, suggesting that there were many schools of study integrating such weapons.

Koike and Kojima's fascination with exotic weapons extends beyond what can be found in most reference books. In "The Flute of the Fallen Tiger," the three Bentenrai brothers carry individual, specialized weapons of destruction. One brother carries a simple sword, but wields it in a special way while another swings a short iron club, and the third brandishes a bladed bear claw. The iron club (fig. 8) was a useful weapon to many samurai. This pictured iron club is shorter than most surviving examples, and it seems to have a wooden haft, but the iron end works in the same way: brutal, bloody bludgeoning. In "The Bell Warden" (*LW&C* Vol. 4), three brothers specialize in weapons that present Ogami with new challenges. The *marukisa*, the *sayfurai*, and the *igiyachi tsukate* are each dangerous hand-to-hand combat weapons (see p. 45).



Fig. 7. iron club

With the motivation to outmaneuver the other schools and combatants, the samurai took it upon himself to learn the ways of all weapons in existence. Given the assortment of these dangerous objects, and the way each person creates his or her own variation, one could imagine what a challenge it would be to be Ogami Itto. It takes time to learn so much about the art of death, but such study was necessary to earn the position of *kagi kaishakunin* — which helps explain why it angered the Lone Wolf to spend such an effort only to be bested by corruption. Like the lost art of swordsmithing, the ever-changing art of war, and the ever-present involvement of politics, would eventually drain the warrior from us all.

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Lone Wolf and Cub (*Kozure Okami* in Japan) is acknowledged worldwide for the brilliant writing of series creator Kazuo Koike and the groundbreaking cinematic visuals of the late Goseki Kojima. Creating unforgettable imagery of stark beauty, kinetic fury, and visceral thematic power, the epic samurai adventure has influenced a generation of visual storytellers both in Japan and in the West.

The [creators] really know how to pace a story and their action sequences come alive on the page... A perfectly formed adventure comic.

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